

Tick bites are on the rise around the world

27th July 2026



Doctors worldwide are becoming concerned about the increasing prevalence of ticks. These are tiny, blood-sucking bugs that carry germs from one host to another. Their bites can pass on serious health problems like Lyme disease.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the USA has reported a dramatic upswing in tick activity. It said thirty-one million Americans are bitten by ticks annually, and that the number of cases is increasing year by year. Biology professor Vett Lloyd said: "Tick populations are expanding geographically because we're changing the climate." The UK's 'Guardian' newspaper reported that cases of Lyme disease rose over 20 per cent between 2024 and 2025.

Ticks are arachnids — they are related to spiders. They have oval, flat bodies and eight legs. After they fill themselves with blood, their bodies become spherical. They range in size from the size of a poppy seed to an apple seed. They latch on to animals and humans by sinking their mouthparts into the skin of their victims. Their mouthparts cut the skin and drink blood for days. Their saliva contains a mild anaesthetic. This numbs the bite area, so people often do not feel anything. The CDC offers advice for avoiding tick bites. It recommends wearing insect repellents that contain the ingredient DEET. It also advises wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and closed shoes.

Sources: time.com / theguardian.com / newsweek.com

Writing

We should all learn more about ticks. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

doctors / ticks / bugs / germs / serious health problems / bites / biology / professor / spiders / blood / poppy seeds / victims / saliva / anaesthetic / insect repellent / numb

True / False

- 1) Ticks are tiny germs that live on bugs. T / F
- 2) Ticks can sting people and their sting can be deadly. T / F
- 3) More than 30,000,000 Americans get tick bites each year. T / F
- 4) Cases of the tick-related Lyme disease rose by 20% in a year in the UK. T / F
- 5) Ticks are not insects. T / F
- 6) The largest ticks can be the size of an apricot stone. T / F
- 7) Ticks can drink the blood of their victims for days. T / F
- 8) Insect repellent with an ingredient called DEET can keep ticks away. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. worldwide | a. increase |
| 2. tiny | b. component |
| 3. upswing | c. very small |
| 4. annually | d. instances |
| 5. cases | e. targets |
| 6. oval | f. globally |
| 7. range | g. saliva |
| 8. victims | h. vary |
| 9. saliva | i. yearly |
| 10. ingredient | j. egg-shaped |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of ticks increasing their body size by drinking blood?
- c) Are small or large creatures scariest?
- d) What can we do to avoid ticks?
- e) What other bug-related problems might climate change bring?
- f) What would happen in nature if all ticks disappeared?
- g) Will you change your hiking habits from now?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the professor in the article?

Phrase Match

1. the increasing prevalence
 2. These are tiny, blood-sucking
 3. pass on serious health problems
 4. reported a dramatic
 5. Tick populations are expanding
 6. Ticks are
 7. their bodies become
 8. They latch on
 9. Their mouthparts pierce
 10. Their saliva contains a mild
- a. the skin
 - b. of ticks
 - c. arachnids
 - d. like Lyme disease
 - e. to animals and humans
 - f. bugs that carry germs
 - g. geographically
 - h. anaesthetic
 - i. upswing in tick activity
 - j. spherical

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you know about ticks?
- b) What would you do if a tick was on your skin?
- c) What use do ticks have?
- d) What do you know about Lyme disease?
- e) What insects have you been bitten by?
- f) Have you seen ticks in your country?
- g) What do you think of the word 'tick'?
- h) Are there any bugs that you detest?

Spelling

1. Doctors worldwide are becoming ceocdnern
2. the increasing enerplcvae of ticks
3. a dramatic gupwsin in tick activity
4. bitten by ticks nlaaylnu
5. olioygb professor
6. expanding yihlprcaloggae
7. They have lavo, flat bodies
8. their bodies become ielrchspa
9. They tlcah on to animals
10. Their mouthparts rcepie the skin
11. This mnsbu the bite area
12. insect prselnelte

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. c	3. a	4. i	5. d
6. j	7. h	8. e	9. g	10. b

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What do ticks carry from host to host?
2.	What disease do ticks give people?
3.	How many Americans are bitten by ticks each year?
4.	What is the cause of the upswing in tick populations?
5.	What rose by 20% in the UK between 2024 and 2025?
6.	What class of creatures do ticks belong to?
7.	What is contained in the saliva of ticks?
8.	What do people feel when a tick bites them?
9.	What is DEET in?
10.	What kind of shirts does the CDC recommend wearing to avoid ticks?

Speaking – Climate Change

Rank these with your partner. Put the ones you least like at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Ticks
- Locusts
- Aphids
- Fire ants
- Stink bugs
- Mosquitoes
- Cockroaches
- Bark beetles

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	T	6	F	7	T	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.